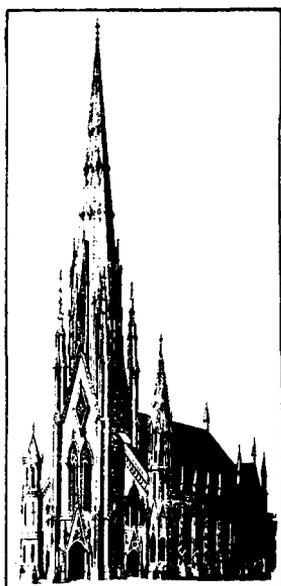
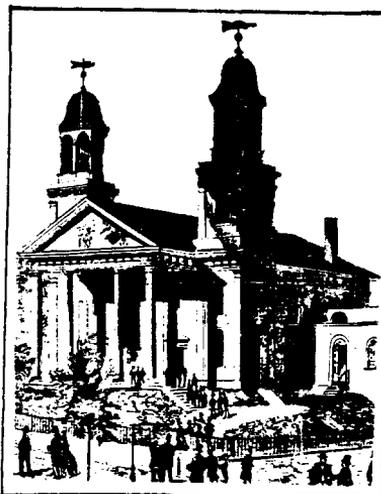
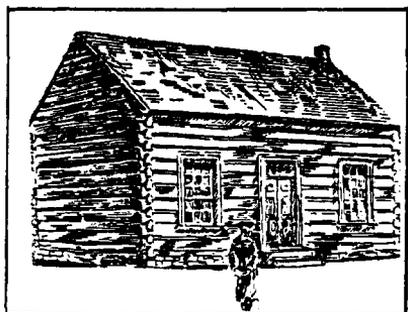
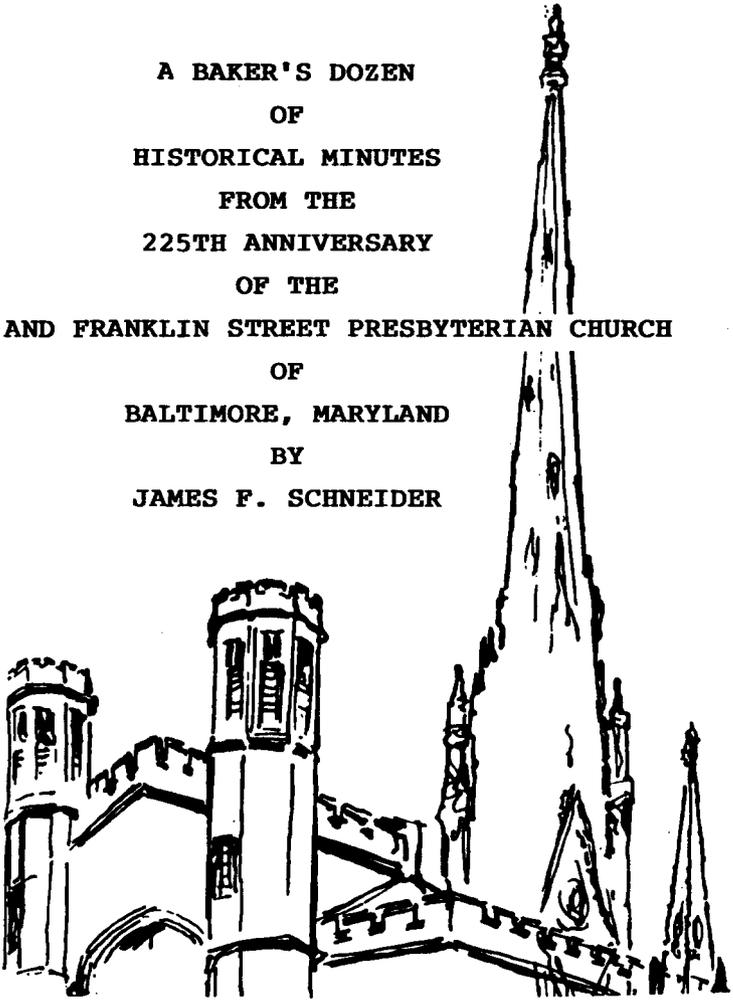


**A BAKER'S DOZEN  
OF  
HISTORICAL MINUTES**



**FROM THE  
225TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE  
FIRST AND FRANKLIN  
STREET PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
1761-1986**

A BAKER'S DOZEN  
OF  
HISTORICAL MINUTES  
FROM THE  
225TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE  
FIRST AND FRANKLIN STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
BY  
JAMES F. SCHNEIDER



## FOREWORD

From a log meetinghouse on the fringe of frontier to the Gothic cathedral at Park Avenue and Madison Streets, the 2-1/4 century chronicle of The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church and its people is the story of the rise of Baltimore. But how to tell that story succinctly and with flair?

In conjunction with the celebration of our 225th anniversary, we commissioned a series of historical vignettes to be presented each month during Sunday morning worship services, highlighting people and events from our rich past. As the author, we chose James F. Schneider, elder and member of the congregation, who, when he is not researching our history, is a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the District of Maryland. Jim agreed, but preferred to write the pieces for other members to present as well. Readers were selected from the congregation. Thirteen "Historical Minutes" were presented between December 1985 and December 1986. They were so well-received that our Historical Committee decided to publish them in book form.

From the beginning, Presbyterians have played leading roles in the history of Baltimore. This collection of stories highlights their contributions and vividly captures their pioneer spirit. I welcome you to share this spirit with us.

March, 1988

Harry L. Holfelder  
Senior Pastor

**225TH ANNIVERSARY**  
**HISTORICAL MINUTES**

1. N. G. STARKWEATHER -- THE ARCHITECT
2. PATRICK ALLISON -- THE PIONEER
3. A MEETING OF THE TRUSTEES -- MARCH 16, 1774
4. EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 1861
5. THE FRANKLIN STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:  
GENESIS AND EXODUS
6. THE TRAGEDY OF ELIZABETH PATTERSON
7. FRANKLIN STREET'S "MOSES":  
DR. WILLIAM SWAN PLUMER
8. THOSE REMARKABLE MURDOCH SISTERS
9. COMMUNION AT DR. KIRK'S CHURCH,  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1915
10. GEORGE AND ISABELLA BROWN
11. FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1980 -- "FIRE!"
12. A MEETING OF THE SESSION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH, DECEMBER 7, 1941
13. MARGARET BOULDEN AND THE TIME CAPSULE

N. G. STARKWEATHER (1818-1885), THE ARCHITECT

Read by James F. Schneider  
Sunday, December 22, 1985

On behalf of the Historical Committee, I am honored to make the first in a series of monthly presentations in the form of historical minutes to be presented during worship in 1986 to commemorate the 225th anniversary of this Church.

Today we celebrate the remarkable architect of this magnificent cathedral on the 100th anniversary of his death. His name was N. G. Starkweather, and he was born in Vernon, Vermont on May 28, 1818. His given name was Gershom Norris Starkweather, which has been erroneously reported as Nathan Gibson Starkwether. In point of fact, he reversed the names Gershom and Norris and was known by his initials.

His name thus appears as an architect in Philadelphia in 1854 at about the time the Reverend Dr. John Backus and the Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church in Baltimore engaged him to design this sanctuary, for which he was paid \$4,089.02. That must have been a princely sum, because the cost of the whole building was \$136,850! He was then only 36 years old.

He lived in Baltimore during its construction from 1856 to 1859, then moved to Washington, D.C., and later to New York. He died in New York City at the age of 67 on December 18, 1885.

Mr. Starkweather designed many important residences and churches in this area. Trinity Episcopal Church in Towson and St. John's Church in Ellicott City are among the survivors. But our church was his masterpiece. "If you would see his monument, you have but to look around you."

Look at the ceiling -- a soaring, triple-vault, plaster-on-wood ceiling, with huge pendants -- called the finest Victorian Gothic interior in North America! You will observe that there are no distracting columns in the middle to obstruct your view. The ceiling is supported by the walls and by a complex system of trusses inside the attic. Oh yes, there is an attic, a space of 30 feet between the ceiling and the peak of the roof!

When you go outside, look up at the tallest steeple in the city, 275 feet high, the finest Gothic Revival tower in Baltimore. Not completed until 1875, 15 years after the sanctuary was built, its construction a generation before the

first skyscrapers, was made possible by the early use of structural iron.

What more fitting place could there be than this, in which to pay tribute to the genius of the master architect, N. G. Starkweather?

Celebrating 225 years of history -- 1761 to 1986 -- and the exciting future that is yet to be -- The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church!



### **First Presbyterian Church**

Park Avenue and Madison Street

Baltimore 1, Maryland

**PATRICK ALLISON (1740-1802), THE PIONEER**

Read by Mary S. McLanahan

Sunday, January 19, 1986

This is the second in a series of historical minutes to be presented during 1986 by the Historical Committee in observance of the 225th Anniversary of this Church.

Back in 1761, when Baltimore Town was little more than 30 years old and consisted of only a few houses on the shores of the Patapsco River, a small group of nine or ten Scots-Irish families formed the congregation of First Presbyterian Church. After meeting in each other's homes for two years, they called as their minister a 23-year-old parson who had just been ordained by the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

In the short space of a generation, Baltimore rose in population and wealth to become the third largest city in America. And the Church which the Reverend Dr. Patrick Allison established in a log cabin at what is now Fayette and Gay Streets grew to become one of the largest congregations in the city, boasting a membership of 160 families and a beautiful new two-steeple church.

Who was this man? We know so little about him. His will provided that all of his private papers be destroyed upon his death. If there was ever a portrait painted of this revered pastor, it too was destroyed, as there exists today no known likeness of him.

During the Revolution he was a leader of the patriot cause, as were many members of his congregation. When the Continental Congress convened in this city in 1776, Dr. Allison served as its chaplain. He was a close personal friend of George Washington, who presented him with the gift of this walking stick, engraved upon which are the names of all the senior pastors who have served this Church since its founding.

Dr. Allison was an outspoken advocate of the separation of church and state, a tradition which is followed here down to the present day.

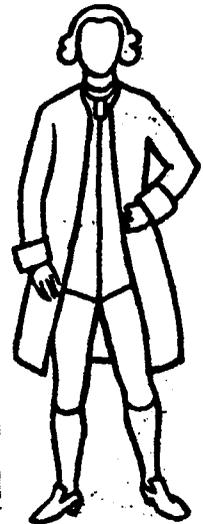
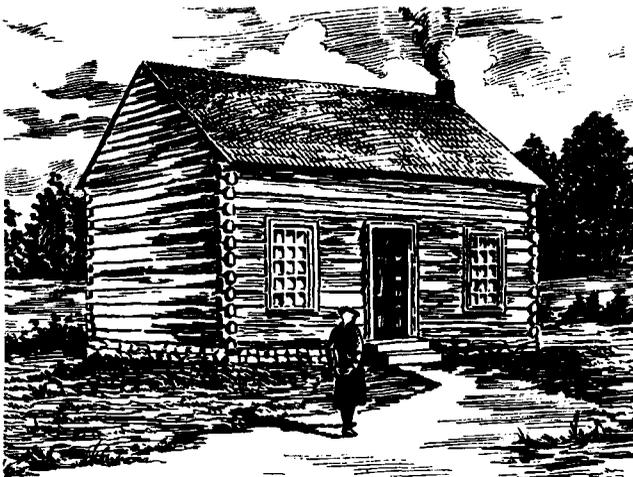
He died on August 21, 1802 and was buried in the Westminster Cemetery, the old burial ground of First Church now located on the downtown campus of the University of Maryland.

After his death, the Session commissioned a memorial to be erected in his honor. They

thought they were getting a plaque. What they got, in the form of a memorial column -- the sort of monument generally erected in a graveyard -- they ordered to be placed in front of the pulpit in the old two-steeple church which Patrick Allison had labored to build in his forty-year pastorate. That monument can be seen today in the rear of the sanctuary.

On a personal note, I am proud to state that Dr. Allison was the brother of my great-great-great-grandfather, John Allison. And the Church he built lives on.

Tracing the glorious tradition of a vital history that gives continuity to the present and confidence for the future: 1761 to 1986 -- The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church.



A MEETING OF THE TRUSTEES

MARCH 16, 1774

Read by William M. Miller  
Sunday, February 23, 1986

This is the third in a series of monthly historical minutes to be presented during 1986 in observance of the 225th anniversary of the founding of this Church.

Here is the earliest record of the proceedings of the First Presbyterian Church: [HOLDS UP BOOK]. This dusty, time-worn volume which dates from before the American Revolution, in which are preserved the minutes of the meetings of our Trustees, known from the very beginning of our history as "The Committee." Due to the small size of the congregation, the first members of "The Committee" performed double-duty as both Trustees and Elders. It was not until 1781 that the two functions were separated -- the Elders concerned with the congregation's spiritual needs, the Trustees directing the Church's temporal concerns.

This morning we are going to make an imaginary journey through time and history to a meeting of "The Committee" which was convened at the home

of Robert Purviance in Fell's Point on the evening of Wednesday, March 16, 1774.

Be it remembered, as the old minute book records, that around the table that evening so long ago in Mr. Purviance's colonial parlor were seated the following Church leaders:

The Reverend Dr. Patrick Allison, 34, our first pastor, chairman of the meeting, who 2-1/2 years later served as chaplain of the Continental Congress when it met in Baltimore;

James Calhoun, recent emigrant from Ireland, later to become Baltimore's first Mayor in 1797;

William Smith, 46, elected to represent Maryland in the first Congress of the United States in 1788;

William Buchanan, 47, later to become Patrick Allison's father-in-law when the parson married his daughter, Mary. Patrick and Mary Allison would, in their turn, present him with a granddaughter, their only child, christened Esther;

Merchants James Sterett and William Spear;

Dr. John Boyd, one of the first physicians in the City; and

Samuel and Robert Purviance, brewers. The Purviance brothers, Irish Huguenots, would serve as agents for Congress in securing supplies during the Revolution. Samuel Purviance was chairman of the Committee of Correspondence for Baltimore Town. While on a trip to Kentucky in 1788, he was captured by hostile Shawnee Indians on the Ohio River and never heard from again.

But on the evening of March 16, 1774, the thoughts of these men of wealth and social position turn not upon their own private concerns, but upon the important matters of their fledgling religious society:

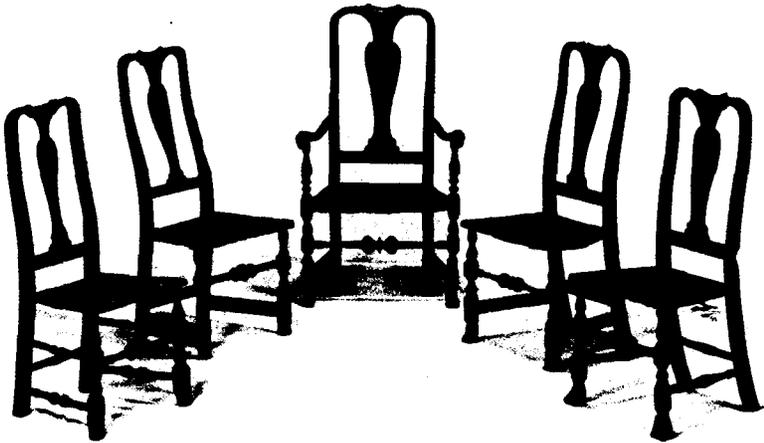
The meeting is called to order, and William Smith reports the cost of recent additions to the brick meeting house to be 349 pounds, 7 shillings and 1 penny [this was the successor to the log church that is pictured in Backus House];

James Sterett, William Smith and Dr. John Boyd are requested to stake the boundaries for a burial ground next to the Church;

James Calhoun is directed "to procure green durant curtains for the south windows of the Church," to be paid from building funds on hand raised by lottery subscriptions;

The business of the meeting is conducted then as now, by majority vote. A motion to adjourn is passed, the benediction is pronounced, and the faithful members of "The Committee" depart from each other to return to their homes, and to proceed into history.

Preserving the precious traditions of a proud past and preparing for the exciting future that is yet to be -- 1761 to 1986 and beyond -- The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church.



EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 1861

Read by Margaret Moulder

Easter Sunday, March 30, 1986

This is the fourth in a series of monthly historical minutes to be presented during 1986 in observance of the 225th anniversary of the founding of this Church.

This morning we are traveling back in time to another Easter, 125 years ago almost to the day. The date: Sunday, March 31st, 1861, the last Easter Sunday before the Civil War. The place: the very pew in which you are sitting in this old Church on Park Avenue. Except that in 1861 the Church was not yet old, it being less than two years since our 4th minister, The Rev. Dr. John Chester Backus, led the congregation to build this cathedral and to sell the venerable twin-belfry church that Patrick Allison built a mile downtown. Remember, the year is 1861, 125 years ago, when this first Presbyterian congregation was already a century old; but this building was new. The steeple and towers had not yet been built. But the interior looks today much as it did then, except that it was much brighter because none of the stained glass windows had been installed.

In those days, and within living memory, the pews were rented by members of the Church. This old book, which dates from 1859, when the sanctuary opened, records the names of the original pewholders and where they sat. Do you see the brass numbers on the arm and back of your pew?

If your are in Pew No. 84, you are sitting with ISABELLA McLANAHAN BROWN, the widow of GEORGE BROWN, who contributed the lion's share of the cost of this building, and in whose memory she would later build the Brown Memorial Church.

In Pew No. 20 sits MR. WILLIAM WALLACE SPENCE, Edinburgh-born banker, whose mansion on the present site of the Fifth Regiment Armory was known as "Bolton," from which the neighborhood of "Bolton Hill" is named.

The merchant ARCHIBALD STIRLING and his wife, ELIZABETH, occupy Pew No. 12, which is a bit roomier this Easter morning because their son, MIDSHIPMAN YATES STIRLING has been away at the Naval Academy since September.

In Pew No. 72, you would be sitting with MRS. ELIZABETH WHITRIDGE and her daughter, OLIVIA CUSHING TURNBULL. A memorial plate marks the spot where they sat so many Easter mornings ago.

On the left of the center aisle, in pew No. 73, are FANNIE AND ANDREW REID, who will later endow a mission school in memory of their children, and for whom Reid Chapel is named.

In Pew No. 112 sits MRS. LETITIA BACKUS, the minister's wife.

All of them are alive again, and worshipping here, in Dr. Backus' church this Easter morning. And all of them are anxious and concerned about the future, for they know that war is coming. Abraham Lincoln has been in the White House less than a month. Everyday the newspapers report the dissolution of the Union.

Dr. Backus ascends the steps to the pulpit, the very pulpit in which I am standing. Tall, slender and erect, he is only 50 years old, but he has already led the congregation for nearly twenty-five years. He must steer a course to hold his church together against the forces that threaten the very existence of the Union.

He looks out upon the crowded church and delivers the Easter message: "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord." The elements of the communion are dispensed. The last hymn is sung. The service draws to a close.

The beloved minister gives the benediction:

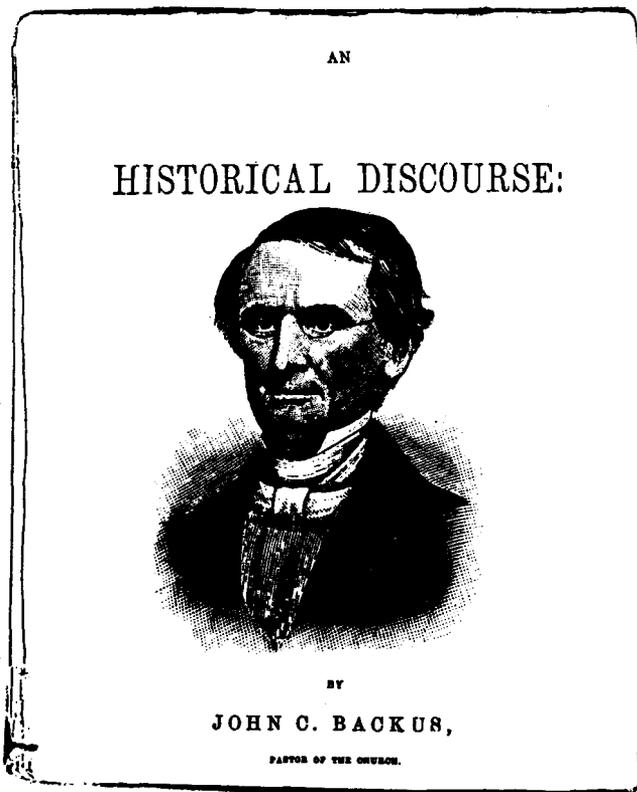
"Peace I leave with you, my peace  
I give unto you: not as the world giveth,  
give I unto you. Let not your heart  
be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

In three short weeks the war will come. On April 12th, Fort Sumter will be fired upon in Charleston harbor. On April 15th, President Lincoln will send 75,000 volunteers south to put down the rebellion. And here in Baltimore, on April 19th, troops of the Sixth Massachusetts regiment will be attacked by an angry mob and the first blood to be shed in the Civil War will stain the cobblestones of Pratt Street. It will take four long years and the blood of a million Americans shed at such places as Antietam, Bull Run and Gettysburg before peace returns to the nation.

But on this Easter Sunday so long ago, Dr. Backus speaks of blood of a different vintage: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you."

Today, in this same place, standing in the shadow of nuclear catastrophe, the same words that comforted the faithful in 1861, assure us as well of eternal life. The communion is ended, but the communion never ends.

Celebrating 225 years of following the risen Christ, and trusting in the future He has planned for us -- 1761 to 1986 and beyond -- The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church.



**THE FRANKLIN STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:**

**GENESIS AND EXODUS**

Read by Cecil B. Bishop

Sunday, April 27, 1986

This is the fifth in a series of monthly historical minutes to be presented during 1986 in honor of the 225th anniversary of the founding of this Church.

The fire that recently damaged a portion of London's Hampton Court Palace reminds us that a replica of Henry VIII's magnificent residence exists very close to home, both geographically and historically speaking. The building to which I refer lies just four blocks southeast of here, across Franklin Street from the Pratt Library, and adjacent to the Roman Catholic Basilica on Cathedral Street. This was the home of the congregation of the Franklin Street Presbyterian Church from 1847 until the merger in 1973 with First Presbyterian Church, and the alternate home of this merged congregation from 1973 until 1976.

The Franklin Street Church was founded in the year 1844 by a colony of two elders, two

deacons and seventy members sent out from the two-steepled First Presbyterian Church on Fayette Street, to spread the faith to the northern suburbs. They purchased a plot of ground from Robert Gilmer and engaged the services of the noted architect Robert Cary Long, Jr., to design the building.

"Seldom has a more promising colony gone forth," said Dr. Backus in his "Historical Discourse." "It was composed of the very flower of the congregation. They went, not because of any dissatisfaction with the old Church, but gave their time, money and labors to the enterprise, with a simple desire to extend Presbyterianism in our city."

The architectural style of the brick and stone building is Tudor Gothic, agreeable to its founders because it dates from the era when the first Presbyterian congregations were established in the sixteenth century. The front of the Church, with its double octagonal towers, centre gable and arched entrance, contains features of both the Great Gateway and Anne Boleyn's Gateway at Hampton Court.

In the meantime, the congregation of First Presbyterian Church sold the old Two Steeple Church and moved to this sanctuary in 1859.

For the next 114 years, until they merged in 1973, the two Presbyterian Congregations existed within walking distance of each other. Both buildings were included on a list compiled by the late Wilbur Hunter, director of the Peale Museum, of Baltimore's 13 most important structures.

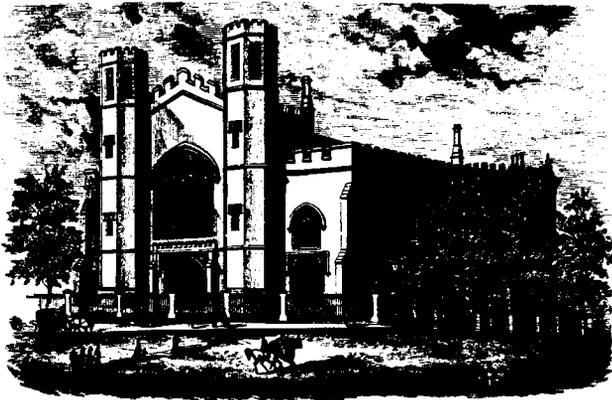
In 1976, three years after the merger, the congregation voted to sell the Franklin Street building and make its permanent home here, at what had been First Church. The sale took place in 1977, and on January 1, 1978, the New Psalmist Baptist Church began services there.

Sixteen months later, the roof of this sanctuary was determined to be structurally unsound. Wooden trusses, designed to hold 800 pounds per square inch, were found to be carrying three times that load, and were cracking under the strain. Crawling through the maze of beams within the ceiling above us, historical consultant C. Dudley Brown, found a crack the size of his hand in one of the main supports. Two weeks later, the crack had enlarged by a number of inches. If the failure of the beams were permitted to continue at that rate, it was predicted that this Church would collapse by 1980. So it was closed in May, 1979, and remained closed for 2-1/2 years while repairs were undertaken, and

a completely independent steel superstructure was assembled inside the roof. It was not until 1981 that we were able to resume services here.

At the time, many believed that these events proved the sale of Franklin Street Church to have been a mistake; that God had somehow played a dirty trick on us which had cost us dearly. But in retrospect, a very different realization has dawned on us, that if we had not sold the Franklin Street Church, this magnificent building would have been destroyed. For what congregation, having purchased this building, could then have afforded to spend the money to save it, as we were able to do with the proceeds of the Franklin Street sale?

Trusting in God's promise for 225 years - 1761 to 1986: The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church.



## THE TRAGEDY OF ELIZABETH PATTERSON

Read by Elizabeth Decembre  
Sunday, June 29, 1986

This is the sixth in a series of historical minutes to be presented during 1986 in honor of the 225th anniversary of the founding of this Church.

The recent death of the Duchess of Windsor calls to mind the story of another Baltimore woman whose marriage to one of the crowned heads of Europe caused an international sensation. She was Elizabeth Patterson, a member of this Church, who married the brother of Napoleon Bonaparte.

"Betsy Bonaparte," as she was known for most of her 94 years, was born in 1785 and baptized by the Rev. Dr. Patrick Allison, founder and first minister of the First Presbyterian Church. She was the daughter of wealthy Scots-Irish merchant William Patterson, whose legacy to his adopted city is Patterson Park in East Baltimore. At the age of eighteen, she met and fell in love with Jerome Bonaparte, Napoleon's younger brother, who was visiting Baltimore. Despite her father's

objections and those of the French ambassador, and ultimately the Emperor himself, she married Jerome on Christmas Eve, 1803. How her father must have disapproved of the marriage, particularly because it was performed by Archbishop John Carroll according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church. But Betsy did not convert to Catholicism, declaring "I was baptized a Presbyterian, and I shall die one. I cannot give up the stool my ancestors sat on."

Their honeymoon was a series of gala parties. They were the toast of Baltimore, and were feted by President Jefferson at a White House dinner. Even old Mr. Patterson himself soon was reconciled to the marriage, but alas! Napoleon was not. He recalled Jerome to Paris, and for awhile it was feared that his extreme displeasure might unravel the delicate negotiations which led to the Louisiana Purchase. When Betsy and Jerome sailed to Europe in March 1805, she was not permitted to disembark with her husband, so she sailed on to England where she gave birth to their son in July. Meanwhile, in spite of the Pope's refusal to sanction a divorce, Napoleon ordered the marriage annulled, proclaimed Jerome King of Westphalia, and married him off to a princess.

Betsy returned home heartbroken in September 1805. She was only twenty years old. Ahead lay a long life of bitter disappointment and regret. The letters from Jerome soon stopped. Her love for him turned to contempt and disillusionment. For many years she lived in self-imposed exile in Europe, returning to Baltimore just before her father's death in 1835. And then, the supreme embarrassment and rejection: She was cut out of his will, except for a few unimportant pieces of real estate and the rents they generated. Yet, by the end of her life, she managed to parlay her holdings into an income of \$100,000 a year. She lived in a boardinghouse on the corner of Cathedral and Read Streets, where she "refused to pay more than \$25 a week for her board; objected to gas, because of expense, and burned candles; wrote notes on the backs of letters to save the price of paper; suffered from cold to conserve fuel; and lived frugally on plain food. She refused to own a carriage and did her own laundry, shocking Baltimore by hanging her red flannel petticoat and other 'unmentionables' out of the window." It was there that she died on April 4, 1879.

Even though Napoleon had annulled her marriage and even though the Maryland Legislature granted her a bill of divorcement in 1812, Betsy Patterson

was still the wife of Jerome Bonaparte in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church. Upon the death of the son of Emperor Napoleon III the same year that she died, the only legitimate heirs to the throne of France were the Baltimore Bonapartes. Betsy's grandson, Charles Jerome Bonaparte, served in Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet as Secretary of the Navy and U. S. Attorney General.

According to her wishes, Madame Bonaparte's funeral was private. There were no flowers. The Rev. James Turner Leftwich of First Church, of which she remained a lifelong member, conducted the services. She was buried in Greenmount Cemetery, near the resting place of another First Church family, the Hall HARRISES, under a tomb that is said to be a replica of Napoleon's grave on the island of St. Helena. And as her epitaph, Betsy Patterson Bonaparte chose to paraphrase a line from Shakespeare's Macbeth: "After life's fitful fever, she sleeps well."

Remembering the part this Church and its members have played in the history of Baltimore over the past 225 years, and the bright future yet to be: The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church.



BETSY PATTERSON

Pastel by D'Almaine after Gilbert Stuart



HER FINAL RESTING PLACE IN GREENMOUNT CEMETERY

**FRANKLIN STREET'S "MOSES": DR. WILLIAM SWAN PLUMER**

Read by Samuel R. McClung, Sr.

Sunday, July 13, 1986

This is the seventh in a series of historical minutes to be presented during 1986 in honor of the 225th anniversary of the founding of this Church.

"In some respects he was the most notable of a long line of ministers. With full-flowing beard, he looked like a prophet and he spoke as one having authority. Crowds attended his preaching in the auditorium of the old First Church [of Richmond]. 'His power in the pulpit was due in part to natural gifts: a commanding person, a voice of great flexibility and power . . . like melodious thunder . . . It was because of his intense realization of the truths he uttered, his deep love for the message itself.'"

He was the Reverend Dr. William Swan Plumer, first minister of the Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, who came to Baltimore on April 28, 1847 from the First Church of Richmond, Virginia, and served for seven years until September 10, 1854. At his installation, he was just shy of his 45th birthday, having been born on July 26,

1802 in Grierstown, (now Darlington), Pennsylvania. After graduating from Washington College in Lexington, Virginia, he entered Princeton Seminary and was ordained in 1827.

Dr. Plumer was an adherent of the so-called "Old School" faction of the Presbyterian Church, which opposed a plan of union with the Congregationalists. This was a hotly-debated topic among Presbyterians back in the 1830s, and it divided the General Assembly of the Church. He founded and edited the journal of the Old School known as "The Watchman of the South." Ninety members, fully one-third of the congregation, left Richmond's First Church over the issue while he was the minister. Within five years of their departure, Dr. Plumber attracted so many new members that the congregation was even larger than before, and he was able to send forth a colony to establish Richmond's Second Presbyterian Church. He was a prolific author, his works filling over twenty-five volumes, some translated into German, French and modern Greek. He left Franklin Street in 1854 to become a professor at the Western Theological Seminary.

He died in Baltimore on October 22, 1880 at the age of seventy-eight. Although he was buried in Richmond following services there in Old First Church, his true memorial is the Franklin

Street Church which is alive and growing here in this merged congregation. And if you should take a walk down to the Old Franklin Street building, now the New Psalmist Baptist Church, you will see the beautiful blue and red stained glass window on the left side of the narthex which was presented by his daughters in his memory. "One panel shows Christ as the good shepherd. The other panel represents Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. The window is historically interesting because it was one of the first two memorial windows in the church and because the face of Moses is a portrait of the first pastor, Dr. Plumer."

Celebrating our place in the seamless fabric of history -- past, present and future -- 1761 to 1986 and beyond: The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church.



## THOSE REMARKABLE MURDOCH SISTERS

Read by Joan Bossmann  
Sunday, September 7, 1986

This is the eighth in a series of monthly historical minutes to be presented during 1986 in observance of the 225th anniversary of the founding of this Church.

DR. RUSSELL MURDOCH (1839-1905) was a respected Baltimore ophthalmologist and surgeon during the second half of the nineteenth century, a member of the First Presbyterian Church and an elder and deacon. He served in the medical corps of the Confederate Army during the War Between the States and was with General Lee at the surrender at Appomattox. In 1882, he was one of the founders of the Presbyterian Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital on West Franklin Street, one of the most advanced hospitals of its kind in the country. He is believed to have been the physician who in 1886 referred six-year old Helen Keller to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Dr. Bell referred her to Perkins School for the Blind in Boston where she met Anne Sullivan, "the miracle worker," who taught the child to read and communicate.

Dr. Russell Murdoch prayed for a son who would not only follow in his footsteps as a physician, but live his unfulfilled dream of becoming a medical missionary. Instead, God sent him four daughters: CHARLOTTE, AGNES, MARY and MARGARET. They were born in the late 1870s and early 1880s, at a time when women generally did not enter the professions. All four daughters went to Goucher College, two became medical doctors, one a registered nurse and another, a teacher. They were brought up in the faith in this Church and spent much of their adult lives as missionaries in China --- a collective total of 117 years.

The first sister to go to China was DR. CHARLOTTE S. MURDOCH, a graduate of the Women's Medical College and the Lutheran Deaconesses' School. The deaconess movement was a short-lived effort in the early 1900s to train women for jobs in public health and mission work. In 1903, she became the Superintendent of the Presbyterian Deaconess Home in Baltimore founded under the auspices of First Church, the first of its kind sponsored by the Presbyterian Church of America. In 1907, she married Dr. Andrew Young of Edinburgh and went with him to work at Hope Hospital, in the village of Hwai Yuen, Anhwei Province, China, 100 miles northwest of Nanking.

The following year, September, 1908, she was joined by her three sisters, who were sent by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in New York. MARY COLE MURDOCH was a teacher and evangelist. MARGARET was a registered nurse. DR. AGNES GORDON MURDOCH, a 1906 graduate of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, was a physician and surgeon. These three women, known as "The Three Musketeers," lived and worked in China from 1908 to 1942, except for brief furloughs when they came home together. Dr. Charlotte Murdoch Young left in 1922 to live with her husband in Edinburgh, Scotland, where she died in 1947.

During their thirty-four years in China, the Murdoch sisters were confronted with severe floods, famine, civil wars, communist troop activities and the invasion of China by the Japanese. One of their most outstanding achievements was the rescue of abandoned baby girls left by their mothers at the mission church. These children were raised in the Christian faith, fed and clothed and given a home. Many of these so-called "Temple Babies" grew up to be teachers, doctors and evangelists themselves.

When the Japanese occupied Hwai Yuen in 1937, the Presbyterian Mission Board gave the Murdochs the option of returning home or remaining

in China. They chose to stay. What matter that they were constantly within earshot of gunfire? So were the people among whom they worked. At the end of their furlough in 1937, they were advised against returning to China by the American Consul in Yokohama. So they went to the Philippines for four months until they were able to reach Shanghai, where they took charge of a hospital for war refugees. Within a year of leaving America, they were back again at Hwai Yuen in the interior of China. They found the village almost completely destroyed and a staff shortage at Hope Hospital. There they remained until the Japanese imprisoned them and forced them to leave the country in June, 1942. Dr. Agnes Gordon Murdoch died in 1955, both Mary and Margaret in 1960.

The Murdoch sisters saw nothing heroic in what they did. They remained in China, they said, because they preferred to remain there. But, of course, it was pure heroism. Selfless devotion. They dedicated their lives to helping others.

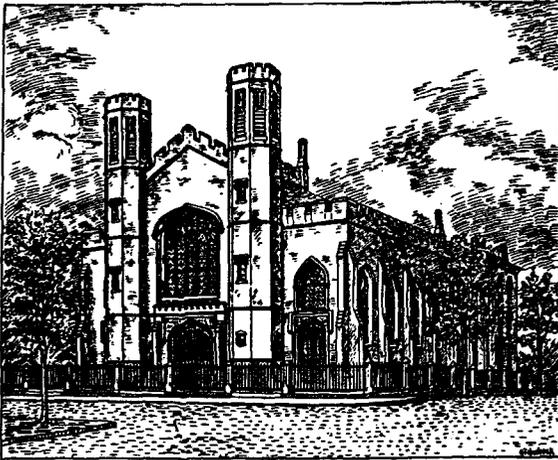
And so God answered Dr. Russell Murdoch's prayer fourfold. Not with a son, but with four daughters whose lives were a gift and a blessing to the world.

*In this place  
will I give peace,  
saith the Lord of Hosts.*

...THE...

## Franklin Street Presbyterian Church

FRANKLIN AND CATHEDRAL STREETS,  
BALTIMORE.



PASTOR, - - REV. HARRIS E. KIRK, D. D., 502 CATHEDRAL ST.  
TREASURER, - - HENRY C. KIRK, 106-108 E. BALTIMORE ST.  
CLERK OF SESSION, - GEO. E. STEVENSON, MT. WASHINGTON.  
TREASURER OF SESSION, - THOS. B. GRESHAM, 815 PARK AVE.

THE PASTOR WILL BE IN HIS STUDY AT THE MANSE  
FROM 12:30 TO 1:30 P. M. DAILY, EXCEPT MONDAY,  
TO RECEIVE ANY WHO MAY DESIRE TO SEE HIM . . .

*Let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob,  
and He will teach us of His ways.*

COMMUNION AT DR. KIRK'S CHURCH,  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1915

Read by Katherine Klier  
Sunday, September 21, 1986

This is the ninth in a series of historical minutes to be presented during 1986 in honor of the 225th anniversary of the founding of this Church.

Homecoming Sunday is an appropriate occasion to go home in memory and imagination back seven decades to attend a service of communion at the Franklin Street Presbyterian Church. The date is Sunday morning, October 10, 1915, before most of us were born. The sermon, entitled "The Power of Goodness," will be preached as usual at eleven a.m. by the Reverend Dr. Harris Elliott Kirk. Two days shy of his 43rd birthday, Dr. Kirk has been the dynamic and intellectual leader of the Franklin Street Congregation since 1901. During a pastorate spanning more than half a century, he will be so identified with his Congregation that it becomes generally known as "Dr. Kirk's Church." His parish measures 40 miles in diameter encompassing a congregation of some of the best minds in the community. There is Dr. Basil Gilder-sleeve, linguist and head of the Greek department

at Hopkins; Arthur W. Machen, Jr., attorney and author; Judge Daniel Giraud Wright of the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City; Dr. David Street and 40 other physicians, the cream of Baltimore's intelligentsia, all members of Dr. Kirk's Church. And then, of course, there are the many non-members who attend his Sunday night "teaching sermons," college students and professors, comprising more than half of the large audiences drawn by his intellectual preaching as if by a magnet. Each summer, Dr. Kirk preaches in London at Westminster Chapel. He has turned down countless calls from other churches, including one from New York's prestigious Fifth Avenue Presbyterian, choosing instead to remain in Baltimore.

This morning, Dr. Kirk's Church is well-filled. Seated among the Congregation is a very special visitor who has come unannounced, except to his longtime friend, the minister. Sitting in Pew No. 7, to the left of the center aisle, is Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, in company with his fiancée, Edith Bolling Galt. Their engagement has been the talk of the nation since it was announced the previous Wednesday, and this is one of their first public appearances together. Mr. Wilson's first wife died in August, 1914; Mrs. Galt also was widowed.

The President and Mrs. Galt motored to Baltimore in an hour-and-twenty-minute drive from the capital and arrived at his brother's home on Mount Vernon Place around ten o'clock. From there it is a brisk five-minute walk to Dr. Kirk's Church, the Presidential party accumulating an entourage of one hundred people along the way.

The service begins. Harry Patterson Hopkins, organist and choirmaster, performs the organ prelude entitled "The Pilgrim's Song of Hope" by Batiste. The President and Mrs. Galt share a hymnal and join the Congregation in singing Hymn No. 239, "Welcome Happy Morning," by Haydn. Dr. Kirk prays that the President receive divine guidance in the face of the European war which threatens to engulf America. Miss Spencer, soprano, sings the offertory solo. During the communion service, the President democratically partakes of the wine from this heavy, double-handled, silver chalice, which has been passed to others before. The use of the common cup will be discontinued three years later during the deadly epidemic of influenza in 1918.

Just before pronouncing the benediction, Dr. Kirk requests the Congregation to remain seated until the President and his family have left the Church.

The service ends. The communion silver is cleaned and put away. The years pass. Wars and depression come and go. The people in our story have all departed from the scene. Harris E. Kirk died in 1953 at the age of 81, having served longer than any other pastor in the history of our Church.

But Dr. Kirk's Church still lives in the merger of First Church with the Franklin Street Congregation in 1973. And just last year, on Sunday, November 24, 1985, our Session formally dedicated its meeting room above the Chapel as "The Kirk Room," in memory of the Rev. Dr. Harris E. Kirk, Pastor-Emeritus, friend of Presidents and common folk, great and good shepherd to his flock.

Keeping alive in our hearts the memory of the heroes of the Church whose history we celebrate --- 1761-1986 --- The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church.



HARRIS E. KIRK



WOODROW WILSON

GEORGE AND ISABELLA BROWN

Read by Christine Wallace

Sunday, October 26, 1986

This is the tenth in a series of historical minutes to be presented in 1986 in celebration of the 225th anniversary of the founding of this Church.

George and Isabella Brown were the most generous philanthropists in the history of the old First Presbyterian Church. He was the eldest of Alex Brown's sons, the banking firm founded in Baltimore in 1800 and now the oldest private banking house on this continent. He was reputed to be one of the twelve richest men in America. It was George Brown who called the meeting at his home that resulted in the founding of the Baltimore and Ohio, the first American railroad in 1827. He endowed the House of Refuge, donated funds for the construction of the Franklin Street Church in 1844, served as Trustee of First Church and on the building committee of the present sanctuary and personally contributed over \$100,000 to its construction. Regrettably, he died on August 26, 1859, little more than a month before it was completed. Dr. Backus said of him, "To Mr. George Brown this congregation owes, under

God, more perhaps than to any other person for its present position in this community."

At his death, the Browns had been husband and wife for more than forty years. She was Isabella McLanahan of Greencastle, Pennsylvania, the beautiful daughter of hardy Scots-Irish pioneers. Their immense wealth was manifested in their three homes: a city townhouse down the street on the site of what is now the School for the Arts; two country estates, "Brooklandwood," the present site of St. Paul's School for Boys; and "Mondawmin," the name given on a visit there by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, now the site of a shopping mall.

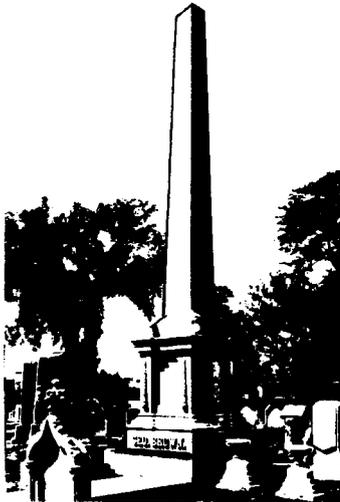
Mrs. Brown continued her husband's benevolences after his death, contributing generously to all of the Christian endeavors of First Church. But seeking some special project as a memorial to him she was counseled by Dr. Backus to erect a new church, in keeping with his desire to spread the faith to other parts of the City.

And so Brown Memorial Church was founded on Bolton Hill in 1870. The Church, plus the lot upon which it was built on Park Avenue and Townsend Street, cost about \$150,000, a gift from Mrs. Brown. The first minister was the

Reverend John Sparhawk Jones, Dr. Backus' able assistant, and later, Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock, the composer of the hymn "This is My Father's World."

Isabella McLanahan Brown died on July 20, 1885 and was buried under an obelisk in Greenmount Cemetery next to her beloved husband. Their true monuments are the two congregations that worship together today in celebration of their lives.

Remembering the departed saints of our church and renewing ties with our neighbors whose common past we share -- The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, 1761 - 1986.



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1980 --- "FIRE!"

(This minute was written for Audrey Suhr to read on November 16, 1986. She was unable to be in Church that morning because her mother suffered a fall. The minute was read by James Schneider with a few pronoun changes.)

This is the eleventh in a series of monthly historical minutes to be presented during 1986 in observance of the 225th anniversary of the founding of this Church.

The sound of sirens in the Mount Vernon area pierced the autumn calm of the afternoon of Friday, October 17th, 1980. At about one o'clock, someone set fire to the old vacant City College building at Howard and Centre Streets, sending spectacular flames eighty feet into the air. Fanned by strong gusts of wind, the fire went to eight alarms and spread to the New Sherwood Hotel on Monument Street, still boarded up since another destructive fire three years earlier.

The Reverend Bill Bearden was working at his desk in Allison House that afternoon. At the same time Darlene Scott, our secretary, and Odessa Wright, longtime friend of the Church, were assembling the Sunday bulletins on the large

oval table in the parlor just outside Bill's office. They were aware of the fire, not only from radio reports, but also from the noise of fire engines and from the thick, black smoke that was seeping into Allison House.

At 2 p.m., they answered a knock on the door and were told that the Church was on fire by Bill Pitz, a church member and also son-in-law of Bill Hopps. He was returning from Alpert's Pharmacy to his job as an engineer with Schlenger & Associates at 714 Park Avenue when he chanced to look up at the roof of the Church and noticed smoke coming from the area just above Reid Chapel.

Howard Shinn, superintendent of NSC Contractors, and two assistants were inside the Chapel roof measuring beams for the prospective renovation of the Church. Failing roof trusses had necessitated closing the sanctuary in May, 1979 and worship services since then had been held in the Chapel. Howard and his workmen were completely oblivious to the danger until Bill Bearden climbed the ladder into the roof and shouted to them to get out. They looked up and saw the attic filling with smoke. Howard took a fire extinguisher and climbed up to the peak of the roof where the fire had broken out, but

could not get within thirty feet of the flames without crawling across the wooden rafters. So he climbed down and with the other workmen he and Dr. Bearden evacuated the building.

Meanwhile, Darlene called the Fire Department and also the Reverend David Colman. It was David's day off, and he was not at home. The answering service at the Horizon House took the message from Darlene at 2:05 p.m. Written on a form that is a masterpiece of understatement, the message reads: "The Church called. Roof is on fire. Please call." No "Urgent;" no "Emergency;" just "Please call." David had the message framed. It still hangs in his office.

By now, Park Avenue was filled with smoke and fire engines and onlookers. Darlene's first thought was to save that which was irreplaceable. She and Odessa gathered up some of the minute books of the Session and Trustees which record the history of the Church and carried them across the street to the engineering firm of Brown & Heim for safekeeping. To her, the scene looked like "the end of the world." Flames were shooting out of the chapel roof and smoke was pouring from the steeple and from underneath the slate tiles on the northern end of the building.

Joan Bossmann, Elder and Chair of the Mission Committee, was working as a lawyer for the Family and Children's Society on Bolton Hill. She heard about the fire on the radio and then received a call from Janet Preston who told her that it was our Church. In a matter of minutes, she was on the scene.

Jim Schneider, an Elder and a Master at the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City, was conducting a hearing when a clerk handed him a message which said that the Church had "burned down." "Excuse me, I have to leave," he blurted out, interrupting the startled lawyers in mid-sentence, and ran out of the Courthouse all the way to the Church.

My children and I had finished lunch at Lexington Market -- Carrie and Bill were off from school that day -- when we drove by and saw the smoke from the hotel fire. I parked our car on McCulloh Street near Arena Stage and we joined the spectators watching the blaze on Howard Street. When we overhead someone say that the fire had spread to "that old Church," meaning this old Church, we bolted around the corner to Park Avenue and joined the crowd standing in the street.

The scene was one of general confusion and excitement. Many of the spectators had tears streaming down their faces. There were firemen on ladders chopping holes in the Chapel roof. The air was filled with cinders and smoke.

Instinctively those of us who were on the scene crossed the fireline and entered the Chapel, retrieving chairs and rescuing waterlogged Bibles and Hymnals. The Chapel was smoky and soaking wet. We carried the Pulpit Bible and Dr. Gardner's memorial cross to safety. Finally, when the ceiling began to fall down, we all got out. It was not until 3:30 p.m. that the fire was declared under control. The Church was saved. We owe a debt of gratitude to the efforts of the firemen, many of whom came from as far away as Anne Arundel and Howard Counties for their care and forbearance.

Incredibly, just days before the fire the attic area had been cleaned. Two tons of dead pigeons and pigeon droppings and coal dust were removed from inside the roof. The Fire Chief said that if this had not been done, the Church would have exploded like a tinder box. The day of personal tragedy was not yet over for me. I returned to the place where I had left my car on McCulloh Street and found that it had been -- towed away!

For the next several months, we held services in the gym on the second floor of Hodge House. Finally the Chapel was restored and services were resumed there. And then, on November 29, 1981, thirteen months after the fire, just five years ago, we held our first service here in the newly-renovated sanctuary.

Not all history is ancient history. Even as the stories of Patrick Allison and William Swan Plumer form a chapter in the traditions of our Church, so too, David Colman, Bill Bearden and you and I and all of us have our own chapters in the continuing story of our rich past and present: The First and Franklin Street Church, 1761 - 1986.

TO: 1708	
DATE: 10/17/82	TIME: 3:05 <sup>AM</sup>
WHILE YOU WERE OUT	
M. One Church	
of _____	
Phone _____	
Telephoned	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Returned Your Call	Will Call Again
Wanted To See You	Rush
MESSAGE: The roof is on FIRE.	
Operator	
horizon house/calvert at chape st.	

**A MEETING OF THE SESSION OF**  
**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**DECEMBER 7, 1941**

Read by Thomas H. Hedrick, Esquire  
Sunday, December 7, 1986

This is the twelfth in a series of historical minutes to be presented during 1986 in honor of the 225th anniversary of the founding of this Church.

Forty-five years ago today, on Sunday, December 7, 1941, members of this Church were just sitting down to dinner when they heard this shocking announcement on their radios:

"We interrupt this program to bring you a special news bulletin. Flash - Washington - The White House announces Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor." With these words, Americans learned that they were at war.

That night, following the regular 8 P.M. Sunday evening service, the Session of the First Presbyterian Church held a special meeting in Reid Memorial Chapel. Present at the meeting were:

THE REVEREND DR. JOHN H. GARDNER, JR., 49, who had then been the pastor of First Church for five years. A native of Ogdensburg, New York, he had served as a chaplain during the First World War before accepting calls to the Fort Street Church in Detroit and the First Presbyterian Church of Urbana, Illinois. Dr. Gardner's ministry to an entire generation of our Church extended beyond his retirement in 1962, when he became Pastor Emeritus, and ended with his death on January 19, 1967. He is remembered as the author of the Two-Century Chronicle of First Church, published in honor of the Church's bicentennial;

With Dr. Gardner that evening were the following Elders: MAURICE FALCONER RODGERS, 53, a 4th-generation member of the Church, who served as an Elder from 1914 until his death in 1968. He was the chairman of the 1955 Building Fund Committee and the 1961 Bicentennial;

HENRY CLAY MILLER, 59, banker at Alex Brown and Mercantile, husband of Janet Goucher, who was the daughter of the Rev. John Franklin Goucher, the founder of the women's college that bears his name;

DR. FRED WILSON BESLEY, then 68 years old, father of Helen Overington and Jean Rodgers.

He was a graduate of the Yale School of Forestry who came to Maryland in 1906 to become the State's first Director of Forests; and

ENOCH PRATT HYDE, 72, the nephew and namesake of philanthropist Enoch Pratt, who endowed both a free library and a psychiatric hospital in Baltimore.

In the absence of Hall Harris, the Clerk of Session, Maurice Rodgers acted as Clerk Pro Tempore. Also absent was Dr. Samuel McLanahan, Jr., who was performing emergency surgery that evening at Union Memorial Hospital.

The old Session book records the proceedings: "This meeting was held only a few hours after a declaration of war by the Imperial Japanese Government against the United States and England, announced earlier today."

What sort of quick and decisive action could the Session take at such a meeting to rally the Congregation in the face of such a helpless situation? "On motion of Elder Rodgers, duly seconded, Session authorized the placing of the American flag and the Church flag in the front of the Church, on either side of the pulpit."

Of course, during the ensuing weeks and years, the Church adopted other measures. Hodge House gym was converted into barracks on Saturday nights for servicemen in need of a place to stay. The women of the Church prepared breakfasts each Sunday for about 125 such guests. By the end of the war, an estimated 20,000 servicemen had been fed and housed there. We operated a Presbyterian Hospitality House downtown which welcomed between 1500 and 6000 service personnel every day! Our members planted "Victory Gardens," collected ration stamps and did all the other things patriotic Americans were called upon to do. And our young people went off to fight.

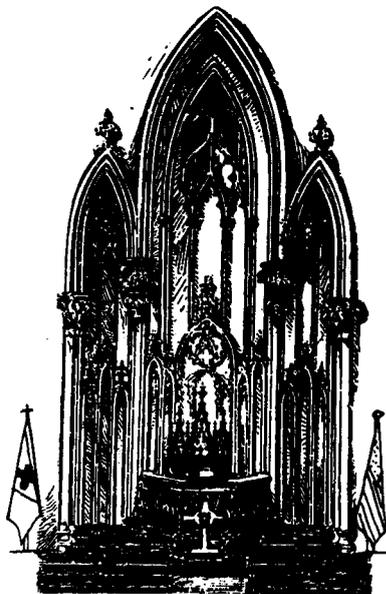
The war forever changed our nation and our world. Never again would we feel protected by the oceans separating us from Europe and Asia.

December 7, 1941, called by President Roosevelt "a date which will live in infamy," has faded into memory. With each new year, there are fewer and fewer Americans left who remember where they were when they heard the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Indeed, all of the Session members who attended the meeting that night have passed into history.

But a stained glass window in Reid Chapel, where they met, records the sacrifice of two

young members of the Church who died in World War II: William Gordon and John H. Gardner, III, Dr. Gardner's eldest son, who was killed in action over Germany on April 20, 1945. And the flags in whose service they died still adorn our chancel. Nearby, the wooden cross in front of the pulpit is a tribute to the life and ministry of that young chaplain in the First World War, who for twenty-six years in war and peace was the tenth minister of the First Presbyterian Church: The Rev. Dr. John H. Gardner, Jr.

As we remember them today and the war's tragic toll, we earnestly commit ourselves to live and work for a world at peace: The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, 1761 - 1986.



## MARGARET BOULDEN AND THE TIME CAPSULE

Read by The Rev. Brooke Gibson  
Sunday, December 28, 1986

This is the thirteenth and last in a series of historical minutes presented during 1986 in observance of the 225th anniversary of this Church.

For more than a century, this mahogany-stained wooden box was the repository of papers of the Trustees of First Presbyterian Church -- known as "The Committee." For many decades, the box was tucked away like a time capsule in a vault at the Mercantile Bank. When First Church merged with the Franklin Street Congregation in 1973, storage space became so precious that even the old box had to be reviewed. Yet The Committee reasoned that "there might be something of value hidden here." The Trustees chose Margaret Boulden to examine the contents for items of historical interest which should be retained. Why was she chosen for this important task?

In First Church, Margaret was the first woman Deacon, the first woman Elder and the first woman Trustee. She founded the instantly-successful Holly Tour and was Chairperson of the Tour for the first seven years, becoming Founding Director when it became incorporated in 1977.

She has served on pulpit search committees and worked on the merger. For twenty years she was on the Board of Managers of the Presbyterian Home. She has invigorated the Women's Association all these years as program chairman, president and a dynamo of activity. And she has been the Prime Mover -- in every sense of the word -- in most of our shifts in and out of our many buildings.

In 1976, the Towson Jaycees gave Margaret their Senior Citizen's Award. The United Church Women voted her Outstanding Woman of the Year in 1979. Margaret says that the Mayor's Award in 1980 was for the Holly Tour, not for her -- but to most people Margaret Boulden and the Holly Tour are synonymous.

Lifting the lid on the "time capsule" box, Margaret discovered, among the piles of thong-bound papers: receipts signed by the brilliant architect, N. G. Starkweather, who designed our present sanctuary in the 1850's; pictures of the two-steeple Church which the Congregation sold to the government for the site of the U. S. Courthouse in 1859; handwritten minutes of church meetings dating from the founding of the Congregation; pew charts showing where our earliest members sat; the correspondence of Dr. John Backus; numerous bills, including one from 1882 for the

first electric lights installed in Allison House, from a firm of electricians appropriately known as "Davis and Watts;" a "hot" letter from a pastor about the cold manse in the winter, and an even colder response from hard-pressed Trustees -- all blotted in the aged brown ink of quill pens. The official files of The Committee are recorded elsewhere, neat rows of bound minute books. Here were the unexpurgated versions of the drafts of minutes and records.

From the melange of ancient documents contained in the box, Margaret compiled these two large volumes -- a fascinating record of our Church's development in a changing world. She selected the material, wrote the text and took many of the photographs. These books are now on display in the front parlor of Backus House.

For this splendid achievement -- not only for the compilation of the material, but for rescuing it from the obscurity of a vault and for making it available to everyone who is interested in the history of the Church, we all owe a debt of gratitude to Margaret Boulden.

Remembering a living past not with nostalgia, but with the knowledge that the past is prologue -- 1761-1986 -- The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church.